



THE
Vote Solar
INITIATIVE

Testimony in Support of the Solar Provisions of SB1
Shaun Chapman The Vote Solar Initiative
March 15th, 2011

Ladies and Gentleman of the energy committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on this important issue. My name is Shaun Chapman, I am the East Coast Campaigns Director for the Vote Solar Initiative a grassroots non-profit organization working to combat climate change and foster economic development by bringing solar energy into the mainstream.

I have attached, as an appendix to this testimony, supporting material for my statement. With short time I would like to get to the crucial points.

2010 was a remarkable year of growth for solar in the United States. However, Connecticut was not one of those states that enjoyed this growth. SB1 is an important step in the right direction. I would like to focus on three fundamental things that a solar market needs that this legislation should preserve.

First - contract length terms must be well known, and they should be of adequate length. This helps lower the cost of financing, bring certainty to the market, and bring lower cost solar. The rate cap control that was included -- and supported by solar advocates -- is something that has been demonstrated in many other states to help control costs.

Second - the alternative compliance payment needs to be clear and certain as well. We advocate for the actual price terms to be set through the DPUC, a much better arena for negotiating those terms. The role of legislation should be firm and direct so all parties know what is at stake for missing targets.

Thirdly - This legislation should fully support PACE programs. Programs where the lien does not take senior status have not shown any signs of serious investment. Connecticut is at risk of again falling behind when PACE programs take off. At the least, this legislation would compromise the promise of commercial PACE lending programs -- which have not been place under threat by the FHFA. The solution is simple, strike this line

"provided such lien shall not have priority over any prior mortgages"

In closing, the legislature should act with haste to pass this legislation. Critics assert, "the solar folks just want to raise your rates." But I ask you to consider this. Some version of this legislation has been before this body every year since 2009. In 2008 Connecticut was 8th in the country in installed solar. In 2009 the state was 9th. In 2010, a record year for the rest of the industry, the state fell to 18th.

Over that period, however, Connecticut has retained its status as number one in most expensive electricity prices in the country. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts -- all states that have surpassed Connecticut in installed solar -- have not surpassed Connecticut in retail electricity prices. Rates have been hard on Connecticut residents and businesses but it is incorrect to blame this on solar.



THE
Vote Solar
INITIATIVE

Testimony in Support of the Solar Provisions of SB1
Shaun Chapman The Vote Solar Initiative
March 15th, 2011
Appendix

Attachment I:

Tracking the Sun III, The Installed Cost of Photovoltaics in the U.S. from 1998-2009
Environmental Energy Technologies Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
Primary Authors: Galen Barbose, Na'im Darghouth, and Ryan Wiser

Demonstrates strong price declines in PV Solar installed costs in markets with long term commitments to program development

<http://eetd.lbl.gov/ea/ems/reports/lbnl-4121e.pdf>

Attachment II:

US Solar Market Insight, March 2011
SEIA/GTM Research

Recent research demonstrating strong PV Solar growth in 2010, further highlighting the fact that Connecticut has been left behind in this regard.

<http://www.seia.org/cs/research/SolarInsight>